

Exhibit 18

ACTION NEA-00

INFO LOG-00 AGRE-00 AID-00 ACQ-00 CIAE-00 INL-00 DNI-00
PERC-00 DS-00 EB-00 EUR-00 OIGO-00 E-00 FBIE-00
VCI-00 H-00 TEDE-00 INR-00 IO-00 LAB-01 L-00
MOFM-00 MOF-00 M-00 VCIE-00 DCP-00 NSAE-00 OIG-00
OMB-00 NIMA-00 PA-00 PM-00 P-00 SCT-00 D-00
DOHS-00 FMPC-00 SP-00 IRM-00 NCTC-00 CBP-00 R-00
EPAE-00 SCRS-00 PMB-00 DSCC-00 PRM-00 DRL-00 G-00
SAS-00 FA-00 SWCI-00 /001W
-----45246C 071237Z /38

P 071235Z NOV 06

FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7911
INFO SECDEF WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC//NSC// PRIORITY
IRAQ COLLECTIVE

RELEASE IN PART B6

CONFIDENTIAL BAGHDAD 004164

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/07/2016
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PINS, IZ
SUBJECT: IRAQI SHI'A POLITICIAN AIRS DOUBTS ABOUT U.S.
INTENT, DETAILS EFFORTS TO REIGN IN SADR

Classified By: Political Counselor Margaret Scobey for reasons 1.4 (b)
and (d).

1. (C) SUMMARY: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] aired doubts about U.S. and coalition intent in Iraq in a conversation with PolCouns on November 6. He raised a number of alleged incidents that, he thought, suggested that the U.S. was turning against the Shi'a and reaching out to disaffected or even terrorist Sunnis in order to regain stability at the expense of democracy in Iraq. While he dismissed the Sunni political leadership as a lost cause, he believed Shi'a leaders' efforts to bring Muqtada al-Sadr and his followers into the political process and renounce rogue JAM elements were bearing fruit. He said that Iraq's leaders needed flexibility and support from the U.S. "so that we do not fail." END SUMMARY.

B6

Doubts About U.S. Intentions

2. (C) After expressing his satisfaction over the Saddam verdict and his disgust with the Iraqi Islamic Party's statement on the verdict, [REDACTED] asked whether the U.S. had engaged the Ba'ath party in serious dialogue, as suggested in a recent Ba'ath party statement. He noted that some interpreted the dialogue between the U.S. and groups engaged

in violence in Iraq as an indication that the U.S. desired stability at the expense of democracy. PolCouns replied that Saddam would never return, that the U.S. had no dialogue with the Ba'ath party, and that the U.S. remained fully committed to democracy in Iraq.

3. (C) [] expressed doubts about U.S. intentions in Iraq throughout the conversation, offering stories he had heard of the U.S. turning a blind eye to the plight of Shi'a citizens, or in some cases actively supporting Sunni terrorists. He claimed that in Diyala MNF-I had arrested effective officers of the Iraqi Army's Fifth Division based on claims by terrorist-affiliated groups that they were involved with death squads while letting a known terrorist from the Zaydia tribe go free two days after detaining him. He alleged that in Balad, a Shi'a area "surrounded on all sides by Sunni extremists," MNF-I had blocked Iraqi police sent by the government to protect Balad residents. [] said he had even received credible reports that U.S. helicopters were dropping weapons to Sunni terrorists in the Yousefyia and Latifiya areas south of Baghdad. PolCouns emphasized that MNF-I made no distinction between Sunnis, Shi'a, or Kurds in pursuing terrorists and killers and noted that Sunni political leaders made similar claims, i.e. that MNF-I abetted Shi'a extremists. She urged [] to convey specifics of any credible problems with MNF-I or U.S. action for investigation.

Bringing al-Sadr, but not the Sunnis, into the Fold

4. (C) PolCouns noted that confronting terrorists militarily was necessary but not sufficient, that there must be a political process that allowed Sunnis, as well as Shi'a and Kurds, to find their place in the new Iraq. How, she asked, can politicians like [] help the Sunnis find their place? [] replied that he agreed but that it was very difficult in practice. Expanding areas of terrorist operation, he argued, was proof that "Sunnis are convinced that their interests are served by terrorists." [] showed no faith in Sunni leaders: "We cannot reform the current Sunni leadership because they have drunk the culture of violence." He said it was necessary to look for moderate, democratic, and "courageous" Sunni elements and draw them away from the Sunni resistance and into leadership positions, but offered no practical suggestions on who they might be or how to do so.

5. (C) Characterizing the Shi'a as inherently non-violent, [] gave two reasons for the presence of the Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM). First, he noted the violent beginning of the Sadr movement, which was born as Muqtada al-Sadr's father turned against Saddam Hussein and was ultimately killed by him. Inclined to violence by this experience, [] continued, the Sadrist founded a militia (JAM) because the

B6

government was weak. Implicitly admitting that militias like JAM posed a challenge to the state, [redacted] said properly training and equipping Iraqi security forces (ISF), and cleansing them of "bad elements," were key to bringing stability to Iraq.

B6

6. (C) [redacted] then detailed his efforts to move the Sadrists from violence to political dialogue. "I have personally spoken with the Sadrists," he said, "and told them that if indeed they are innocent of these killings they must allow the government to arrest those behind them, or even bring them in themselves." Elements of the JAM are uncontrollable, [redacted] continued, with some following Syria and Iran, and they do not obey al-Sadr. "I do not want to blame Muqtada for mistakes others are committing," he argued. [redacted] urged greater flexibility from the U.S. in approaching the JAM problem. "It is better that the ISF conduct operations (against rogue JAM elements) with support from you, not that you conduct them yourselves. We need to exchange ideas and we need your support in this area, so that we do not fail."

B6

The Shi'a Coalition and the Dawa Party Conference

7. (C) [redacted] downplayed differences within the Shi'a coalition, saying that those differences "would be reduced." Noting the split of the UIA over the regions formation law, PolCouns asked about the overall state of the coalition. [redacted] said that the split had occurred not because of any question about the importance of federalism but because various parties in the coalition were concerned that other parties wanted to dominate the Shi'a south. He expressed his hope that over the next year and a half the Shi'a parties and population would come to a "deeper shared understanding" of the ideal shape of federalism, "be it one province regions, three province regions, or whatever it is."

8. (C) Finally, [redacted] confirmed to PolCouns that the "higher cadre" of the Dawa party was planning to hold a conference in the near future. The conference, he said, was planned for November 9 but was postponed for security-related reasons. (Note: A vehicle curfew has caused CoR to postpone its sessions November 5 and 6, so CoR may hold a session on November 9 if otherwise would not have. End note.) [redacted] described Dawa leadership as "communal" and said that elections would perhaps bring some small changes to the group of leaders, but nothing major. He said that the significance of the conference lay instead in that it would be the first such conference to be held after the fall of the Saddam regime and that Dawa leaders would discuss and analyze the current situation in Iraq. He said that Ibrahim al-Jafari was invited but did not know if he would attend.

Comment

9. (C) [redacted] persistence in turning the conversation to stories he had heard that raised doubts in his or his constituents' minds about U.S. intent was notable. Notwithstanding his obvious sectarian bias, his credulity in believing that MNF-I helicopters might be dropping weapons to Sunni terrorists near Baghdad indicates the extent of current doubts within the Shi'a community about U.S. intentions. It also reveals the insecurity the Shi'a still feel in their role as leaders in the new Iraq, as does his comment about the need for U.S. support "so that we do not fail." It is promising that [redacted] and other Shi'a [redacted] continue to try to draw al-Sadr and his followers into the political process, but disturbing that he has written off the Sunni leadership. End comment.

KHALILZAD

B6

NNNN